

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation. In light of the facts that Sinclair's political aim with this action is so clearly to keep the current Bush administration in power, and that the FCC under this administration has allowed such consolidation of media power & has tried to permit even more, it is pretty obvious that there is a very incestuous relationship between these giant media companies and the Bush administration. This unhealthy relationship is beginning to look an awful lot like the state run media companies of the Soviets.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest as a condition of use. But when competition is reduced to just a few large companies with very similar political interests, we are in danger of having one sided propaganda passing as news instead of a broad spectrum of divergent viewpoints that we need for our democracy to truly function. These huge media companies have the power to stifle any voices that offer ideas or facts that contradict the companies' own narrow interests.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Make no mistake, media power IS political power, and the framers of our democracy would be appalled to see so much power now consolidated in the hands of so few.

Thank you.